INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN GENERAL SCHOOLS- A REVIEW

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Abstract

In education perspective each child must be treated as a learner and he or she must be provided opportunity to learn in nearby schools irrespective of their diversity. Indian government support and promote inclusion of children with disabilities but still it is in its infancy stage. Most of the teachers and community member are not aware about it, whereas considerable studies are in support and indicate that it is beneficial for all children with disabilities, children with no disabilities, teachers and community also. Teachers are not prepared and competent to implement inclusive practices in their classroom due to insufficient training and lack of knowledge of inclusive teaching practices, skills and strategies, instead they know the benefit of inclusive education and are willing to welcome and celebrates diversity in their class. While the aim of Inclusive Education is to include all children with SEN (Special education needs) in mainstream schools and there are ample challenges that have to be overcome for their education to be meaningful. This paper stressed on, to understand intellectual disabilities, challenges and constraints in inclusion of children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities in general classrooms and is trying to cover and outlined inclusive and teaching strategies by review of related literature, so that intellectual disabled children could bring to the general schools for the supportive and quality education to meet their educational needs and opportunities.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Disabilities, Intellectual disabilities, Challenges in inclusive education

Introduction:

Education is a mean to develop human beings in accordance to their capacity and develop itself in demand for the society to live with self respect and dignity that will move society in a right direction. Hence, it is a basic need of everyone to get opportunity to take part in the educational process instead of some of them not gets the chance to fulfil their educational needs. It may be because of their economic status, social status, emotional, linguistic, or may be due to the other reason of disabilities. Most of the children are out of reach of the educational facilities. Although government of India implemented the number of

policies to achieve the goal of education for all but still yet to achieve, there is not any special provision in mainstream government schools for education of disabled other than deaf and blind children like mentally retarded, mentally ill, autism affected, cerebral palsy affected and multiple-disabled. These children with disabilities are nurtured to some extent through the special schools of non-government sector. To achieve the above said goal of education and to bring the children with special needs in general education system, the principle of inclusive education was adopted at the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality" (Salamanca, Spain 1994) and was restated at the World Education Forum (Kumar and Kumar 2007).

Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as a *process of addressing and responding to the diverse need of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education* (UNESCO, 2005).

It includes that all children irrespective of their diversity should be participate actively in all curricular and co-curricular activities with other students under single umbrella. The term 'inclusive education' was initially introduced by a small group of a Frontier college, Toronto, in year 1988 and that encouraged inclusive participation rather than exclusion and from that very point, it became an international buzzword among educationists (DJK & Balakrishnan 2012).

.Inclusive education in India still is a development approach and it is in its infancy stage (Kohama, 2012). Education is a basic human right of all children, maximum population of disabled lives in rural areas where the special education facilities not satisfactory, it is out of reach of rural population. Therefore, it is not justifiable to educate children with disabilities in special school which is not easily assessable for them. Hence, inclusive schools that is to educate children with disabilities in general schools which is close to them, only the way to address the needs of all children with disabilities. The goal of inclusive schools is not only to enrol or physically placed the children with special needs with others, it consider to provide quality education to all children with or without disabilities, for the purpose these schools must be run on the wheels of inclusive policies, strategies and practices.

Research questions:

1) What is an intellectual disability?
2) Why education of mentally challenged children is required?
3) Why they are challenged to enrol in general schools?
4) How they can bring to the general schools?

Objectives of the study:

1) To understand the concept of intellectual disabilities.

2) To analyse the educational challenges of intellectual disabilities.

3) To suggest the practices and strategies for the inclusion of intellectual disabilities.

Intellectual disability

The first systematic and documented program of intervention for ID (intellectual disabilities) was developed in France in 1799. Jean-Marc Itard, a medical doctor, developed a skill-based program for a feral child named Victor (Kumar2014). Braddock and Parish (2002) have defined disability as socially determined interpretation of impairment by others. Thus the whole concept of ID and how to define or categorize people with ID (PWID) has been affected by how people in different cultures and in different periods of time have defined it and understood it (Harbour & Maulik, 2010). Around the world, the last four decades have seen an increased focus on early intervention, community-based rehabilitation, definition and diagnosis, human rights, and legislation, with particular stress on deinstitutionalization for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities (Harbour & Maulik, 2010). The diagnosis of intellectual disability developed over time as societies became more complex and psychological testing gained popularity. Intellectual disabilities previously named as mental retardation under the American Association of Mental Retardation. Currently the term *Intellectual disability* replaced the term *mental retardation* and the authoritative definition and assumptions promulgated by the AAIDD (American Association of Intellectual and Developmental disabilities) previously the AAMR remain the same.

The term *intellectual disability* covers the same population of individuals who were diagnosed as mental retardation and every individual who is or was eligible for a diagnosis of mental retardation is eligible for a diagnosis of intellectual disability.

The term *intellectual disability* reflects the changed construct of disability proposed by AAIDD and WHO (Schalock, et.al.2007). It is important to understand the terms that are associated with intellectual disabilities. The first term is disability; Disability is an individual performing which includes physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual mental illness impairments, and various types of chronic diseases. In the context of health experience, a disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being (WHO-ICDH 1980). The next term involves intelligence, intelligence is the ability to think logically, reason out problems, prepare, understand difficult ideas, and the ability to determine quickly and or acquire from experience. Third term is adaptive behaviour. Adaptive behaviour is the

collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills that all individuals learn in order to perform in their everyday lives.

The authoritative definition of intellectual disability in AAMR manual is;

An Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18 (Schalock, et.al.2007).

But it does not mean that individual with low I.Q. will be diagnosed as mentally disabled. If a person have low I.Q. with high adoptive behaviour, and high I.Q. with limited adaptive behaviour than there is no intellectual disability found but if a person have low I.Q. and limited adoptive behaviour than only he or she will be diagnosed as intellectually disabled (Kumar 2014).

Person with disabilities Act (equal opportunities, protection of right and full participation) 1995 categorised disabilities as blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, mental retardation, mental illness, locomotors impairment and leprosy cured which stresses on the need to provide free of cost education to all children in an appropriate environment till they are 18 years old (Kumar & Kumar 2007). Whereas the National trust Act 1999 listed disabilities as autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities (Roy, 2014). This act seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons who within the disability sector, have been even more marginalized than others.

Intellectual disability vs mental illness:

Generally peoples are not aware about the term intellectual disability and they do not know that the mental retardation/ intellectual disability not a mental illness. Confusion about the term mental illness and intellectual disability is common. People with intellectual disability may also experience mental illness but the two conditions are very different. In India it was the first time in 1987 when Mental Health Act 1987 differentiates mental illness from mental retardation. It is important for the teachers and others to understand the difference between mental illness and intellectual disabilities then only he or she will prepare themselves for teaching task, skills and instruction to the children with ID in their classroom.

Difference between mental illness and intellectual disabilities:

	Intellectual disability	Mental illness
Assumption	Intellectual disability is a state of mind not a disease	Mental illness is a disease
Effect of medicine	Intellectual disability cannot be treated medically or by medicine	Can be treated with medicine or medically aids
Onset	Intellectual disability originates before	It can be originate in any time in

	18	any age before or after 18.
Social Adjustment	Show Limited social adjustment	Shows normal social adjustment somewhat and somewhere shows abnormal behavior May have high or low I.Q.
I.Q.	Below 70	
Classification	Can be classified on the bases of • I.Q. • Education achievement • Need	Can be classified on the bases of symptoms according to the types of mental illness as psychosis, neurosis, mania, schizophrenia etc.

Challenges in and education of children with intellectual disability:

Education of children with disabilities shift from segregation to inclusion in general schools with other students of without disabilities. While attitudes of teachers and community member have changed and knowledge about etiology and treatment have improved, still PWID (Person with Intellectual Disabilities) continue to be a neglected community across most countries, especially the resource poor countries, and this adds to the growing burden of ID on the community, in such countries(Harbour and Maulik,2010). Originally peoples think that children with ID are unable to learn and they are assigned to institutions for care not for learning (Blatt 1981). But findings of research indicates that even children with severe or profound ID do well academically and socially if they include in general school and provided with quality inclusive education (Hunt and Goetz 1997). Researchers are in support for the inclusive education for the students with disabilities including moderate to severe disabilities (Jackson 2003). It does not means that CWSN children do not achieve or do well in segregated settings but it concluded that they do better in inclusive settings compare to segregation regardless of the extent of their disabilities as before said. Inclusion is not only to placed CWSN child physically in general schools and not too to keep them assisted continuously with skilled staff resulted in overdependence, however, inclusive environment provide a meaningful learning environment for the students with and without disabilities and provide quality education for all so that it will help the students to become self independent and live with self respect in their society.

Common constraints and challenges on the bases of reviews of some research papers and articles in the success of inclusive education are teachers' negative attitude, curricular concern, lack of infrastructure, lack of available funding, lack of awareness of community, parent's attitude, administrative staff and policy maker support and lack of trained personnel that can slow down the progress of inclusive education (Sharma, Mamgain &Sharma 2015). Among these some are:-

1) *Negative Attitudes of school teachers*:-

According to **Freeman:** "An attitude is a dispositional readiness to respond to certain situation, person, or objects in a consistent manner, which has been learned and has become one's typical mode of response".

Teachers are the most important person to implement education programmes successfully; it can be possible only if their response or attitude is positive towards it. In inclusive education teachers are not prepared for inclusive environment and not aware about the philosophy, pedagogies, benefits, practices of Inclusive education and rights of children with disabilities. Experts are in agreement that complete inclusion and acceptance of students with disabilities in to the regular classroom will happen only, after there is a long term change in attitude (Rajani 2012, Hofman & Kilimo 2014, Bhatnagar and Das 2013, Shah, das, Desai, et.al.2013).

Studies conducted to assess teachers' attitude, towards inclusive education in India are revealed that teachers have a negative attitude to teach in inclusive environment (Bhatnagar and Das 2013, Shah, das, Desai, et.al.2013) and all shouting that teachers who hold negative attitude towards inclusion tend to employ less effective instructional strategies, and student with disabilities do not achieve their expected learning objectives.

2) *Lack of trained and competent educators*:-

Studies revealed that regular teachers are anxious and have a high level of concern to include children with behavioural and severe disabilities in their class (Das &Kattumuri) and they are in set that CWSN are the responsibility of special educators because they trained with such special education training that they need. It may be because of teachers not aware about and not trained with the inclusive practices, pedagogies and strategies. Teachers in themselves are an essential and vital component to ensure the quality inclusion of all children with and without disabilities in school environment. Forlin (2001) and Valiant (2010) acknowledged that many teachers struggle with problems coming while implementing inclusive education and seem not to have skills to meet the needs of special education children, they are not familiar with proper training concept and back ground of inclusive education. Due to these different aspect the problems will always arises while implementing inclusive education (Hoffman & Kilimo-2014).

3) *Negative attitudes of parents of children with and without disabilities*:-

Attitude of parents of children with and without disabilities also have prime role in successful inclusive education. The parents of both categories have fear and anxiety related

to expected outcomes of their wards while studying in same class. A focus on physical access (e.g. distribution of aids and appliances), or infrastructure such as ramps in school rather than other access, results in selective inclusion, with being prepared in order to be ready for the mainstream (Shalini 2013).

4) *Challenges to include children with intellectual disabilities*:-

This paper stressed on the education of children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings. This group of disabilities are challenged to bring in general schools because of their low intellectual function which include low reasoning, thinking, learning, cognitive skills, analyse, interpret ideas and problem solving skills, learning daily lives skill etc. Intellectual disability may be classified as intermittent, limited, extensive, and pervasive on the bases of demand of needs of children with ID or it may be classified as mild moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities according to psychological classification. Educationally intellectual disabilities can be classified as educable, trainable and custodial. Teachers are in fear and have negative attitude for the children with ID, and other behavioural disorder and they are in the favour that the basic educational needs of children with ID could be address only in special schools settings (Das & Kattumuri).

To make inclusive education possible and to better accommodate for children with different educational needs, the present education system, educational structure, and educational practices need to become more flexible, more inclusive, and more collaborative (NCERT 2006).

There is controversy in the findings of research regarding inclusion of children with ID, according to Simmons 1988, in some cases basic rights to education of children with special needs could be met only in special schools settings rather than in inclusive settings (DJK and Balakrishnan 2012). Whereas, some studies concluded that children with disabilities even moderate to severe disabled children can be included in general schools and they do better in general school setting (Downing, 2010).

Education system must support everyone's learning irrespective of their diversity and should be treated each child as a learner. Even there is a provision of special schools for the children with special needs, but it is not easily assessable and approachable for the children and parents also. Which resulted in deprivation of their educational opportunity and it is in travesty of social justice and equity. In Indian constitution education is a basic human right so it should be close to all and everyone according to their local condition and culture. No child left behind act (NCLB) 2001 and Individual with disabilities act (IDEIA) 2004 act are in the favour of inclusive education to meet the educational needs of children and to achieve the

goal of education for all. On the bases of review of research papers this papers is in the favour of inclusion of all children with their learning diversity too in general schools. They have the right to learn with their peer without disabilities it will help them to understand their social value, easy to interact with others to make friends and ultimately will promote to develop society as inclusive society.

Practices and strategies for inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities:

According to Heward (2009), students with intellectual disabilities have significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, even though there are effective educational strategies that teachers can use to help these students to be more successful and will ultimately improve their quality of life. Inclusive education is the full time participation of students with special needs in their general classroom settings with the necessary supports and services to benefit from educational activities (Lipsky & Gartner, 1992; Ryndak, Jackson, & Billingsley, 2000). It also ensures access to the core academic curriculum for the student with moderate or severe disabilities, which is a legal mandate as per IDEIA (2004) and NCLB (2001) (Dymond, Renzaglia, Gilson, & Slagor, 2007). Students do not need to demonstrate grade level performance but can gain valuable academic and non academic skills from participation in grade-level lessons. The student must be supported to learn in an environment with high expectations and is expected to be actively engaged in all learning opportunities. While the student with intellectual disabilities may not be expected to learn the content in the same manner as their classmates with no disabilities, they should be challenged to learn as much as possible. Inclusion of children with ID is challenging, therefore on the bases of review of national, international research papers and text books this papers is trying to frame or outline some practices for the arrangement and provision of successful, meaningful, and challenging environment with the recommended instruction techniques so that their unique strength and needs can be addressed. Findings of research indicates successful outcomes of children with disabilities in general schools settings instead of exclusion and studies also in support that it is benefited for the children with no disabilities too.

It is important to keep in mind that students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities can also learn and benefited in general education environments, but they need skilled and competent teachers with inclusive pedagogies and strategies to provide the adapting and accommodating school environment, that they need to be successful. The benefits of inclusive education for students with severe disabilities have been well established by Carter & Hughes, 2006; Cole et al., 2004; Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Foreman, Arthur-Kelly,

Pascoe, & Smyth-King, 2004; Idol, 2006; Meyer, 2001 in their studies, as Communication, social skills have increased, and enhanced academic skills also have been noted for students with moderate to severe disabilities when educated in general education classrooms (Downing 2010). Whereas few studies indicated that the student with ID may only benefit socially from inclusion, and their academic training would be compromised. A distinct possibility is that the need for high quality education may become unimportant while riding on the wheels of inclusive education (DJK and Balakrishnan 2012).

Teachers who come in the contact with diverse learning environment require knowing strategies to provide the necessary individualized and systematic instruction in general classrooms. Considerable research has been conducted by the researchers as Barudin & Hourcade, Biederman, Fairhall,et.al. Post & Storey, on effective teaching strategies for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities (Downing 2010). Some of these practices are task analysis, constant or progressive time delay, simultaneous prompting, and least to most instructional prompting.

Downing 2010 has suggested and recommended some premises for the student with moderate to severe disabilities to instruct them successfully in inclusive settings such as presumed competence of all learners, family involvement, positive behaviour approach and self-determination.

a) **Assumed competence:-**Assumed competence of all learners is in belief that, *all* children can and do learn. No student is considered too disabled to benefit from quality instruction. We can never sure that what student can learn but when student assumed as to be competent then they will gain access to age level experience and information, if they assumed as not to be competent then it can limit their access to experiences and information.

b) **Positive behaviour support:-**This approach deals with empowering the student and demonstrating respect for individual preferences. The majority of all students in a school generally respond well to a positive, supportive and nurturing environment. Inclusive classrooms should Involve families and significant others in learning activities, planning and special days, as well as keep in information about the needs of their young person.

c) Work in **collaboration** by the general educators, special educators, paraprofessional staffs and other is another most important inclusive strategies to instruct and teach student with disability individually and effectively, it should be promoted by all the members of schools and community.

d) IEP:-*An IEP is an Individualized Education Program and a written statement developed by the IEP team individually for students with disabilities to ensure their educational goals are achieved*. A student's parents, teachers, and other service providers meet to come to a consensus about the educational accommodations necessary to assist the student in meeting the objectives (cited from Wikipedia). This group of professionals and parents are known as the IEP Team. Studies are in favour on positive effect of IEP on development of academic, social, personal, occupational, and recreational skills of PWID (Deepika,2014), and give a positive feedback that these children may learn together with nondisabled children in inclusive settings.

There are some other important strategies that could be used to teach children with intellectual disabilities and these are:

Baby Steps under which every task, skill or activity of children with intellectual disabilities needs to be broken down into small baby steps.

Chaining is the process of breaking a task into its small steps and teaching them in a sequential manner. It is usually used to teach daily living skills and life skills and

Group learning one of the most effective teaching strategies for students with intellectual disabilities. Children often do better, their behaviour difficulties are less, and children motivate each other when they are in a group. Group learning is that when we need enough hands to help children to learn together (Kumar, 2014).

Conclusion:

It is well known by the educators that the children with intellectual disabilities are challenging, but we should not forget that they are also human beings and part of our society we should do much better and always prepared to welcome these students for their good social life . It is insufficient to placed children with intellectual disabilities physically in general classroom settings without receiving the individualized and systematic instruction that is needed to learn. Curricular adaptations are essential to allow cognitive, physical, sensory, and motivational access, but specific instruction for each student is also needed to ensure that learning occurs, and students are truly a part of the learning community. Many students with moderate to severe disabilities are still waiting to receive a high-quality and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. It is noted that studies indicates successful academic and social outcomes of intellectually disabled children even though the effect of inclusion, on the educational achievements of students with SEN, is a concern of debates and further research.

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